

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery
Final Meeting Summary
November 5, 2019 from 9:30 – 3:30

Attendees:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Carol Serdar	WA Dept. of Ecology
Paul Sparks	WA Council of TU / TU / American Rivers
Rich Turner (by phone)	Tech Rep for NMFS
James Archibald (by phone)	Tech Rep for NMFS
John Serl	Tech Rep for WDFW
Sam Gibbons	Tech Rep for WDFW
Brian Gale	Tech Rep for WDFW
Peggy Miller	Tech Rep for WDFW
Josua Holowatz	Tech Rep for WDFW
Matt Bleich	Tech Rep for TPU
Eric Shoblom	Tech Rep for TPU
Florian Leischner	Tech Rep for TPU
Melora Shelton	Tech Rep for TPU
Phil Sandstrom	Tech Rep for TPU
Chris Foster (by phone)	Tech Rep for TPU
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Steve West	LCFRB
Ann Weckback	Lewis County, Tech Rep for TPU
Rudy Salakory (by phone)	Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Tech Rep for TPU
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

Remaining 2019 FTC Meeting Date: Dec. 3 from 9:30-3:00 at Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery.

Proposed 2020 FTC Meeting Dates: Jan. 7 (Public Meeting), Feb. 4, Mar. 3, Apr. 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, Sept. 8 (Sept. 7 is Labor Day), Oct. 6, Nov. 3 (Election Day), Dec. 1

- Action Item: All to review 2020 meeting schedule and be ready to approve or change it at the December meeting.
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FHMP Update

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Matt reminded all that all draft chapters were sent out by Travis during the last FTC meeting. The remaining chapter will be out for review by November 8. He also discussed how two sets of workshops would provide a forum to identify and discuss unresolved topics after everyone has reviewed the draft FHMP. After some discussion, we agreed on the following:

Initial Workshop Dates:

- February 18, February 26, and March 3 (at front-end of FTC meeting, as needed)

These initial workshops are forums to identify and resolve “low hanging fruit” that needs to be addressed in the document.

Subsequent Workshop Dates (will occur prior to FTC meetings on these same dates):

- April 7, May 5, and June 2 (after this meeting, content will be sent to TPU’s technical editor (schedule, interim actions, arguments pro and con).

These dates are reserved for any topics that remain unresolved after the initial set of workshops. Such topics will be addressed with white papers that include a strategy and schedule for resolution. The white papers will be appended to the draft FHMP to illustrate these topics and how they would be resolved.

Paul expressed concern about the structure of workshops, preferring that such discussions occur with the entire FTC. Matt reminded all that the entire FTC is encouraged and expected to attend the workshops. He welcomed suggestions for the structure.

Paul announced that in December he will present a formal alternative strategy which he sees as a major shift for recovery specifically in the upper Cowlitz Basin. Bryce observed there seems to be a disconnect because his sense is that the structure and scope for this were agreed to (prior to the subcommittee meetings).

Action Items:

- Travis: Report back to the FTC after November 6 conference call with FERC.
- Travis: Coordinate with Paul on his presentation for the December meeting.

Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery (CRR) Fund: 2019 Grant Round Process
Presenters: Florian Leischner and Melora Shelton

At the October meeting, the FTC agreed on a preliminary funding decision for the 2019 grant round. After reviewing and discussing the supporting decision document, there was a consensus decision to approve funding for the Cispus Yellowjacket Creek Phase III Restoration Project. Melora walked through the funding decision document. After discussion and minor edits, it was approved by FTC representatives in attendance.

Observations by FTC of 2019 Process:

- Outcome would have been the same if the CRR Subgroup had continued to operate separately.
- CRR Subgroup members were the ones who scored the projects.
- This seemed like a more open process than when done through the subgroup
- Didn’t appreciate the surprise in the middle of the process (changing the structure from subgroup to the entire FTC, during FTC meeting).
- LCRFB TAC will not be formally scoring CRR-only projects in the future unless there is a nexus to a SRFB project. The CRR review is being removed LCRFB’s Grants Manual for 2020. They will still use “binning,” but the benefits-to-fish category will be defined by the TAC (vs. staff). They will only use the PRISM database.
- The LCRFB TAC information provided was hard to use; seemed like some details were missing.
- LCRFB TAC “Binning” made it seem like all projects were approved since the money was there.
- Outreach/engagement with applicants could be improved. There was no help for habitat project proponents in filling out the applications.

- Initial meeting TPU had with proponents of the hatchery projects was seen by some as less than positive, and actually discouraged several potential applicants from putting forth a proposal. (LCRFB has optional pre-proposal meetings.)
- For hatchery projects, with all the regulatory permitting, not sure workshops would be helpful since there is considerable lead time required – and a need to have in depth discussions with TPU and WDFW.
- While we want to assist with applications, we can't write them ourselves.

Suggestions by FTC for 2020 Process:

- Could we refer proponents to other similar applications they can use as examples?
- Review the implementation strategy.
- Create a formal process by which applicants and reviewers can be assured there is no conflict of interest or perception of conflict of interest.
- Habitat project process was well defined. By contrast, the hatchery project process was incomplete and rushed. Need to address this for the next grant round.
- RFPs should go out with ample time for folks to put together a thoughtful application.
- Need to better define the vetting process.

2020 Grant Round Program Updates:

Florian walked through a PowerPoint presentation of additional suggestions to improve the 2019 process. These included:

- Amend Implementation Strategy eligibility bullet list (e.g., define “public works project”, etc.).
- Allow for indirect overhead (guideline of 25% max?)
- Include the federal government as eligible entity
- Apply species/population priorities to all proposals (Make Spring Chinook more of a priority species for both types of projects)
- TPU/FTC responsible for solicitation, application, and review for all proposals
- Independent from LCRFB process/calendar and SRFB match requirement
- More stringent application requirements with required letters of intent.
- FTC can determine any draft application needing substantial changes or not fully developed ineligible for current grant round
- Have two ad hoc technical review committees review proposals and make recommendations to FTC (HAP and Habitat)

The purpose of the CRR Subgroup function was to take some of the workload off the FTC. This is like having specific ad hoc technical teams for habitat / hatchery projects. TPU thinks the CRR Subgroup should exist in an ad hoc capacity, rather than as a standing committee. This means being formed as needed, with the appropriate technical expertise, and at the request/direction of the FTC. The original model for disbursing funds was the HAG. Carol explained Ecology needs to stay involved with the discussions, but not the review and the scoring. Ecology supports the method reflected in the prior decision document. Travis reiterated that the proposal for 2020 is for the FTC to be able to request specific work products of CRR group on an ad hoc basis.

Action Items:

- Travis: Ensure consistent format in titles of decision documents.
- Steve: Send out new LCFRB manual. *(Done.)*

- Florian: Work with Peggy to frame up decision document of work products requested of CRR subgroup(s) for future grant round process.

Gravel Augmentation

Presenter: Florian Leischner

Florian explained that while TPU is continuing to pursue access to the other side of the Cowlitz River below the Barrier Dam, they are also continuing to look at other potential sites. The construction window is the month of August which was missed this year due to permitting questions related to the ESA consultation. Another complication has been public pushback on the Mill Creek location. Some landowner outreach is needed to determine if the gravel would fill in the popular fishing hole there.

Florian reviewed the draft decision document to delay gravel augmentation until 2020. While seeing the need for the delay, WDFW staff shared some of their concerns with the decision document, including that the next steps for implementing in 2020 and moving into the 5-year plan are not well defined. WDFW would like to see the justification for the need to delay. They also believe the next steps portion of the document could be strengthened to show an ability to achieve the 2020 target. When asked where the check-in points with the FTC would be, Travis responded that these would continue to occur at monthly FTC meetings. It was suggested that the decision document perhaps show another check-in point with the FTC about what the rest of the four years look like - either clearly line out how we are going to get there or describe the strategy and plans to make up the difference. This would provide some certainty of success.

Carol expressed concern that we are accumulating a lot of gravel and she doesn't want to see most or all of it deposited in a single location – which is what we have now. Florian agreed and explained the intent is to instead place gravel in five or six distinct locations within the reach. Paul said he hoped monitoring data as well as logistics in gravel placement were being considered.

It was noted that the DNR permitting process usually takes a long time. It would be helpful if the decision document included locations, timelines, priorities, etc. in support of the reason for the extension along with a reasonable idea that we could get there. Other suggestions included checking the math in the table and including the monitoring plan. Could some baseline redd mapping be done now to serve as a baseline later?

Action Items:

- Bryce: Send technical edits and other suggestions to Florian.
- Florian: Incorporate these edits into a revised draft decision document and send out in advance of the December FTC meeting.

Coded Wire Tagging at Mayfield

Presenter: Phil Sandstrom

Prior to the October meeting, Phil drafted and distributed a decision document reflecting the recommendation to move coded wire tagging of Coho from Cowlitz Falls (CF) back to the Mayfield Counting House. As not everyone had been able to review that document, it was agreed to shift this topic to this meeting. Phil explained the rationale behind the decision document. As the downstream collector is becoming increasingly efficient, capacity at CF is

becoming an issue. Bryce explained that WDFW sees this decision document as a little premature, as he thought this was something the M&E Subgroup would spend more time on – working through the pros and cons, while attempting to quantify some of the impacts. Phil responded that the M&E Subgroup has discussed this strategy, though they have not yet discussed the spreadsheet that John put together. He further explained that this decision document was written at a high level on the recommendation of the M&E Subgroup, and that more details would be covered in FTC discussions. There will be some fish that won't get marked at the Tilton. These Tilton-origin NOR Coho would be trucked back up the river, being placed into a different population, which is part of the FHMP strategy. WDFW thinks the decision document should be expanded to include the relative impact (using math) of shifting marking locations along with mitigation measures and how adaptive management would work.

There was also concern that this decision document has gotten out ahead of the FHMP. Phil responded that there is a need to make the change in location now as we continue to have better Spring Chinook collection and are running against constraints in terms of how much they can handle at the current Cowlitz Falls Facility. Laura expressed a concern that this might affect LCPUD's Bi-Op associated with their license. There is a concern that an increase in fallbacks will lead to corrective actions from FERC.

Action Items:

- Laura: Send LCPUD study to Phil, John, and Bryce. *(Done.)*
 - Phil: Convene M&E Subgroup to edit the decision document to address concerns shared at this meeting. Send decision document out prior to the December meeting.
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Review of FTC Protocols

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis reviewed the current protocols, which are to be updated on an annual basis. He will take feedback from this discussion and incorporate it into a revised draft which he will send out in advance of the December meeting.

Discussions included:

- Concerns about subgroup/subcommittee function and how developed. Charter? How do they function? What about notetaking and reporting back to the FTC? List the subgroups of the FTC.
- Public meeting protocols should be added. How we craft the agenda for public meetings and the time in the public meetings for public comment.
- Add the purpose of the FTC (from the SA) to the protocols for context.
- FTC agendas: Some like having the decision documents up front. Others prefer to start with updates. Regroup updates by who is giving the presentation.
- Decision making: Consider a more formal decision-making process such as the Sussman model. Define what constitutes a major decision. What might require a proxy if an FTC member is unable to attend a meeting? Add that decision documents be sent out at least a week in advance if a decision is to be made on it at the subsequent FTC meeting. Note that these can be written by anyone, not just TPU. Attach links to supporting documentation (relevant reports/plans). If possible, have decision documents presented one month and then approved the following month. Need decisions at that level to be documented through notes / meeting summaries
- How are technical reps defined? Include in protocols?

- We don't want these protocols to be too restraining. We want these protocols to reflect a collaborative model.

Action Items:

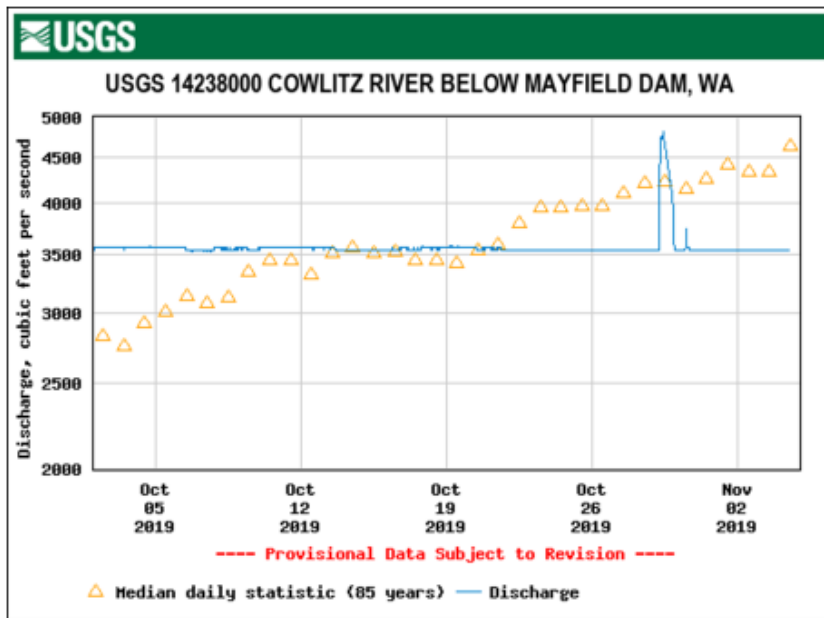
- All: Send Travis additional ideas including what constitutes a major decision.
- Travis: Send out revised protocols to all in advance of the December meeting.
- Lyn: Send out description of Sussman model.

Approval of Meeting Summaries

The September and October FTC meeting summaries were approved with edits and will be posted to the public website. Thanks to WDFW for their attention to detail – much appreciated!

Updates

- Hydro Operations: Florian reported October was very close to average for inflows. Riffe Lake was at 719' as of November 3. Minimum flows have been steady at 3,500 cfs with the exception of a couple of ramping exceedances. At Mossyrock, one unit was out for maintenance when the other shut down. The operators had to do a ramp manually (max drop of 3"/hour) and are in the process of bringing one unit back online. The 10-day forecast for rain has been reduced from 3-5" to ½".



No minimum flow exceedances: 10/1 to 11/15 min. flow: 3,500 cfs
 Ramping rate exceedances: Oct. 29 and Oct 30

Link to the USGS real-time Cowlitz River hydrograph:

https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14238000&PARAMeter_cd=00060,00065

- **Action Item:** Melora to email charts to Lyn to send out to all. (Done.)
- Water Quality: Carol reported that she just edited the two Water Quality Protection Plans and looks forward to seeing those reports. Kosmos oil is oozing out of a slope. TPU BMPs may not work with increased water level, so hoping it doesn't rain.
- M&E Subgroup: Phil announced the Annual FHMP Status Update will be to the FTC by November 15 for a 30-day review. TPU will incorporate comments received and

send the report to FERC by end of the year. Getting comments in early will be much appreciated as time is tight.

- Tilton Release Site: Around 75% of the site development is complete. The 16' tube will be delivered by November 8. The site prep should be complete by Thanksgiving. The gates should arrive the week of November 18. The commissioning / testing protocol will be discussed at M&E Subgroup, in coordination with TPU engineers.
 - Action Item: Eric - Send Travis PowerPoint presentation to post on the public website.
 - Downstream Adaptive Management TWG: Matt reported they are working on a decision document for the FTC with the final set of recommendations for 2020. The document will include supporting rationale. Part of the annual process is having a utility (LCPUD and TPU) meeting. They are still working through an aspect of entrance efficiency evaluation.
 - Action Item: Matt - Send out decision document prior to December meeting.
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Meeting Evaluation

- The volume on the phone was finally adequate – much appreciated!
 - Good paraphrasing to ensure understanding of various viewpoints.
 - Discussions on clarifying processes were very constructive.
 - Nice to have the full 30 in for lunch despite the full agenda.
 - It was another long meeting, and everyone stayed engaged!
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Potential Topics for December 3 FTC Meeting

- Usual updates incl. Water Quality, Mayfield Juvenile Collector study update
 - M&E Subgroup
 - CWT at Mayfield Decision Document
 - Alternate Tilton Release Site
 - Gravel Augmentation Decision Document
 - Downstream Adaptive Management TWG Decision Document
 - FHMP Update
 - Update from meeting with FERC
 - Paul's alternate recovery strategy for upper basin
 - FTC Protocols
 - Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery Fund
 - Scope of Work (Decision Document?) for CRR Subcommittee
 - Satellite Rearing (?)
 - Set Topics for January 7 Public FTC meeting including:
 - Mayfield Juvenile Collector
 - Update on Satellite Rearing
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Parking Lot

- Review Steelhead Recycling Program